



PRESS RELEASE

For additional photos or info, contact:

Tami Vater, ext. 4457

502-564-1792

Kentucky Historical Society

100 West Broadway – Frankfort, KY 40601

Basketmakers to be highlighted at the Kentucky Folklife Festival



(Photo caption) Hart County Resident Lestel Childress instructs grandson Jeffry Carroll in the finer points of making a white oak basket. These traditional artists, along with several members of the newly formed Mammoth Cave Basketmakers Guild, will be one hand throughout the three day festival to share skills and insights pertaining to this uniquely Kentucky art form. (Photo by courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society, Folklife Program.)

The Old Capitol Grounds in Frankfort will once again come alive on September 25-27 with the Kentucky Folklife Festival, the greatest sampling of the state's folklife found anywhere.

Each year the festival highlights the unique cultural heritage of everyday Kentucky life. Featured this year are the communities along Dixie Highway (U.S. 31W) and a celebration of the area's basket making traditions.

Visitors will see some of the finest of the state's folk artists up close through demonstrations by members of the Mammoth Cave Basketmakers Guild. The guild, formed in 2002 is a group of

central Kentucky folk artists who organized to better promote, through education and marketing, the time-honored tradition of basket making unique to south central Kentucky.

Basket making has been an important part of the folklife along Dixie Highway for different reasons at different times. The traditional white oak egg basket familiar to many was, of course, originally made for egg gathering. But as U.S. 31W became a major route for tourists headed to and through the Mammoth Cave region, the baskets became a source of financial support for families who carried on the tradition.

Today these handmade baskets are a source of pride for Kentucky basket makers, as folk art enthusiasts from around the world seek them out and they become highly collectable.

Basket makers present at the festival will include Charlene and Charles Long, who will demonstrate weaving techniques used in the construction of their willow and honeysuckle creations, Leona Waddell and members of the family of early basket makers Lestel and Ollie Childress.

The festival is a program of the Kentucky Historical Society and Kentucky Arts Council, agencies of Kentucky State Government's Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet and showcases the continuing efforts of the Kentucky Folklife Program to document, conserve, and promote the state's folk traditions. There is no general admission charge, but there are fees for some festival activities such as boat rides. Donations are accepted and appreciated.

For more information about the Kentucky Folklife Festival, visit the website folklife.ky.gov or call, toll free, 1-877-4HISTORY (1-877-444-7867).

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